



Traffic Services Section Michigan State Police Field Update #15

Providing Traffic Related Information and Services to Michigan Law Enforcement

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Tinted Window Enforcement and Medical Exception

[MCL 257.709\(3\)\(e\)](#) provides an exception to the prohibition against tinted windows for “a person who is light sensitive or photosensitive, if the owner or operator of a motor vehicle has in possession a letter signed by a physician or optometrist, indicating that the special window treatment or application is a **medical necessity**.” Although there are a few genuine medical conditions, like skin cancer, that could potentially offer a legitimate use of the medical necessity exception, in many cases the doctor’s letter is either obtained under false pretense, overstates a minor eye problem that is better treated with sunglasses, or amounts to a “permission slip” rather than a prescription.

Because tinted windows can be detrimental to traffic safety by reducing a driver’s visibility outward, and to officer safety by reducing visibility inward, reducing the number of vehicles with tinted windows by eliminating marginal or improper doctor’s letters is a legitimate goal. The Traffic Services Section has been made aware of several creative ideas used in this regard including obtaining a subpoena for the doctor to testify to the medical necessity and submitting a Request for Reexamination (OC-88) form to the Secretary of State.

International Driving Permit

It appears that the fraudulent “International Driver License” (IDL) is again becoming an issue in Michigan. The Vehicle Code Unit was recently contacted regarding the use of such a fraudulent document by a Michigan Militia member during a traffic stop. The driver produced a document that appeared to be a legitimate document issued by the government of the [Turks and Caicos](#) Islands. The IDL does not exist, per se, but is often confused with the legitimate International Driving Permit (IDP).

Under the Geneva Convention on Road Traffic (1949), the IDP is a supplementary document that provides a translation of a current valid operator’s license into several languages (usually nine). It is not valid by itself, and must be used in conjunction with a valid license. It is not valid in the country where issued and is only valid for one year. Its sole purpose is to facilitate the contact between a police officer and a motorist who speak different languages. The permit is not required to operate a vehicle in most of the treaty countries, but Article 24 (2) advises that “A Contracting State **may** however require that any driver admitted to its territory shall carry an international driving permit conforming to the model contained in Annex 10...” An IDP is not required for foreign drivers in Michigan.

There are numerous companies advertising on the Internet, attempting to sell documents as if they were legitimate international licenses. Most of the advertisements are just confusing enough to entice customers into thinking they are obtaining a valid document, making reference to or using language from the Convention. The ads generally state that such “license” can’t be revoked or assessed points, which is technically true but misleading as it is not a license at all. The target audience of these ads appears to be those persons looking to hide their identity or confuse police officers. **A citizen of the United States operating a motor vehicle in the United States would be required to have a license from his home state and should not be presenting an IDP to a police officer. A police officer that is presented only an IDP or IDL on a traffic stop should request identification documents, especially a valid license and passport, to verify the subject’s identity and ability to drive.** Particular attention should be given to documents alleged to have been issued by nations in the Caribbean.

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